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IN THIS ISSUE:

Volunteers Wanted for Rice-Planting Mission in Bangladesh
"Conflict at Canterbury"
Seeing Other Asians' Points of View
Airin Gakuen Celebrates Twentieth Anniversary
Program of Japan Urban-Industrial Mission Conference in May
Tokyo Union Church to Observe Centennial
Observe Half-Century of Legal Protection of Minors
Coming Events - March through June '72
Yasukuni and The Japanese Mentality
Fire Damages Osaka Community Development Center

VOLUNTEERS WANTED FOR RICE-PLANTING MISSION IN BANGLADESH

Fifty young Japanese men are being sought to help plant rice in Bangladesh for a period of 3-4 months in a joint project of the NCC Division of Service and CARITAS-Japan, at the invitation of two Bangladesh relief organizations.

Heading the team will be Kazuho Makino, who went to Bangladesh on a similar planting mission in 1970. Makino has also had agricultural experience and training in India and the Philippines.

Volunteers are being recruited primarily from Japan's agricultural population to help put in rice for fall harvesting. Applicants should be persons over the age of 18 who can operate a small tractor and who are in very good health. Travel expenses will be paid for by CARITAS-Japan and NCC, and contributions toward this project are now being received by the Division of Service office in the Japan Christian Center. Maintenance in Bangladesh will be provided by Bangladesh Ecumenical Relief and Rehabilitation Service (BERRS).

The Ainokai of Mie prefecture, an agricultural organization, has already expressed interest in providing team members. Other persons interested are asked to contact the NCC Department of Service as soon as possible (tel. 03-202-0486). It is hoped that the team can be sent by the end of this month.

Arranging for the volunteer team on the Bangladesh side are the Christian Organization for Relief and Rehabilitation--CORR (Roman Catholic) and BERRS (Protestant). Both of these groups are working in cooperation with the CARITAS--International and the World Council of Churches.

The service organizations in Bangladesh already have on hand 300 Japanese power tillers for the use of the mission.

"CONFLICT AT CANTERBURY"

A "sound and light" drama entitled "Conflict at Canterbury" will be presented in the St. Alban's Anglican-Episcopal Church on Sun., March 12, at 6:00 p.m. and on Wed., March 15, at 7:30 p.m. Originally written to be produced in the Close of Canterbury Cathedral, the drama retells the story of Henry and Becket as well as other events in the history of the Cathedral. A donation of ¥1,000 per family or ¥500 individual is requested. The church is located at 10, Shiba, Sakae-cho, Minato-ku, Tokyo.

***** "We must recognize the diversity in the situation and problems of Asian peoples, without drawing them into the realm of our understanding and interpretation," concluded members of a 10-man team of young Japanese workers who toured six South-East Asian countries Jan. 10-29. The trip was led by Rev. Minoru Ishimaru, executive director of the Keiyo Culture and Education Center (see JCAN Dec. 17, 1971 #401 p.4)

A chemical engineer, a medical doctor and eight young workers met leaders in government, industry, labor unions, education, community organizations and Christian churches in a series of visits set up through Christian groups in each country. Japanese participants are primarily persons active as volunteer leaders in the Center Youth Party, which was organized in 1969.

Director Ishimaru noted, "Every country we visited has certain problems in common with the others--the social confusion and the sincere endeavor to raise the standard of living of the people through modernizing the industrial structure and related social structures." But, he continued, there are basic differences from country to country with regard to ideals, methodologies arising out of those ideals, and the social structure itself. The team felt the recognition and acceptance of these realities, achieved by trying to stand in the same place that they stand, must be the starting point of fellowship that would make possible the mutual sharing of problems, troubles and hopes.

"Throughout the tour, we felt that we Japanese were being asked, 'Can you accept us on our terms?'" said Ishimaru.

Keiyo Culture will invite from other Asian countries persons experienced in Christian social activities to spend one or two months in Japan this year, the expenses being borne by funds awarded Ishimaru as recipient of the Edward W. Browning Achievement (see JCAN Oct. 15, 1971 #397 p. 6).

AIRIN GAKUEN CELEBRATES TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY

"At least the bridge at Ochanomizu didn't leak," commented Reiji Takahashi, with a dubious look in the direction of the ceiling of the old building that has housed Fukagawa Airin Gakuen since the program was established following the war but which is now badly in need of replacement.

The occasion for Takahashi's reminiscences and remarks was Fukagawa Airin Gakuen 20th anniversary celebration. The work had grown out of Takahashi's contacts with orphans and shoeshine boys living in mikan-box housing under the bridge at Ochanomizu Station in Tokyo right after the war. At that time Takahashi was a theological student at Aoyama Gakuin; today he is a minister of The United Church of Christ in Japan and pastor of Fukagawa Airin Church as well as a popular speaker in other churches and groups.

Takahashi described the early days under the bridge as "nai no ni aru"--in spite of having nothing, we had something--because of the love and genuine concern shown by other people.

The Gakuen program began as preaching place, nursery and kindergarten when families were evacuated from under the bridge to the Fukagawa area and Takahashi moved with them. Today Airin Gakuen provides extensive community-wide services for all ages and is the locus of a large-scale Protestant and Catholic volunteer program. In the new facilities now being planned will be provisions for health counselling, labor schools, extension programs for the elderly, etc.

Persons wishing to be a volunteer in the Yūai Hōshidan--Friendship Volunteers--may contact Sister Kathleen Stack, director, 03-721-3111.

The annual NCCJ-sponsored Conference on Urban-Industrial Mission will be held May 30-June 2 at Tozanso, Gotemba on the theme "Participation in Community Development" under the broader topic of "Mission Grappling with Urban-Industrial Issues." The program:

Lectures followed by small group and plenary discussion

Urban Development - Foshio Mikuchi, Education Dept., Chiba University
Industrial Society - Masatake Sugi, Social Science, Rikkyo University
Labor Welfare - Takeshi Chujo, Social Science, Doshisha University

Panel of Theologians, viewing content of lectures and discussion

Toshihiko Kawanishi, Faculty of Christian Studies, Rikkyo University
Toshikazu Takao, Theological department of Meiji Gakuin University
Masao Takenaka, School of Theology, Doshisha University

Symposium on Social Education:

Minoru Ishimaru, Keiyo Cultural and Educational Center
Shinken Toyonagi, education with minority groups, Mi Kai Ho Buraku,
Nishinari, Osaka
Satoshi Hirata, Kansai Institute for Workers Culture and Education

Formulation of Concrete Goals, Strategy, Feedback to Churches and Society

Attendance is limited to 80 persons, with a quota of participants suggested to each denomination. Invitations are also being extended to the Japan Catholic Church and to Taiwan, Korea and Hong Kong. (Missionaries should contact their denominational leaders). Cost, including meals, room and registration is ¥8,000. English reports of the 1971 conference, held in Kita Kyushu, are available from NCC for ¥75 in stamps or coin.

TOKYO UNION CHURCH TO OBSERVE CENTENNIAL

On Sept. 1, 1872, a group of foreign residents of Tokyo gathered in a one-story building with a steeple to dedicate it as a Christian church. They needed a place in which to hold the "Union Church Services" they had begun more than a year before in private homes. The location was Tsukiji, on Tokyo's waterfront, a residential area reserved for foreigners, who were then a new and numerically modest part of what was to become the world's largest city.

The old building is gone but Tokyo Union Church, since 1930 located in the center of the city near the Meiji Shrine, is not. Except for the years of World War II, it has given a century of services as a self-supporting, international, interdenominational church for Tokyo's English-speaking population.

Ecumenical from the beginning, the church was first made up of Protestant missionary families. The pastors among them took turns filling the pulpit. Since 1952 the church has had full-time pastors. The incumbent, Rev. Erwin Ruklic, a United Presbyterian, came to Tokyo in 1971 after four years at the International Church in Bangkok.

The church building today looks much as it did when it was dedicated in 1930, despite the fact that it was severely damaged during World War II. In 1949 the reassembled congregation undertook the reconstruction of the building utilizing the original architectural plans. It was rededicated on Nov. 18, 1951.

There are more than 450 members today, drawn principally from foreign residents of Tokyo. They include business and professional people, teachers, diplomats, missionaries, and government employees' representative of more than 15 countries and a wide variety of denominational backgrounds.

Church officers are planning a week-long centennial celebration Oct. 12-22. A number of former members and associates, known traditionally as "TUC alums," are expected to be in Tokyo for the event. An expanded edition of the church history will be available in June. (Further details about the centennial program may be obtained from Rev. Erwin R. Ruklic, Tokyo Union Church, 7-7, Jingumae, 5-chome, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 150.

***** April 1, 1972, is being cited by organizations engaged in research, prevention and treatment of alcoholism as the jubilee of the enactment of the Prohibition Law for Minors--persons below the age of 20.

According to Dr. Bufo Yamamuro, director of the Japan Council on Alcohol Studies, the law was passed as the result of 22 years of hard work by Sho Nemoto, a member of the House of Representatives and a staunch and devout Methodist, who persisted in spite of scorn and misunderstanding. The enactment of prohibition legislation in the United States and mediation by Ichimin Tago the director of the then-Social Bureau, helped the bill to eventually be passed by both houses.

Yamamuro comments that the law was sometimes called the "bamboo basket law" because the influence of traditional customs were very strong and the provisions of the law were not always strictly or faithfully enforced. Moreover, it was not a "restraining law" but rather a "normative law." The penalties for violators were rather light, minors being merely warned or admonished.

Nevertheless, says Yamamuro, this law along with the Anti-Smoking Law for Minors below the age of 20, passed in 1900 have constituted the "moral backbone" OF THE NATION SINCE THEIR ENACTMENT.

COMING EVENTS

----- March through June 1972 -----

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| March 13-15 | Keswick Convention | Committee JCAN 2/10/72 #404 p.5 (17) |
| March 13-15 | Kyodan Conference on Confession of Faith Tozanso, Gotemba | United Church of Christ in Japan |
| March 21-27 | Spring Music Camp Tozanso, Gotemba | JCAN 1/14/72 #402 p.4 (4) |
| March 23 | NCC Central Committee Nihon Seikokai Tokyo Kyoku Office | NCC |
| March 27-29 | Kyodan-related Missionaries Conference Tozanso, Gotemba | JCAN 2/25/72 #405 p. 2 (20) |
| April 13-15 | NCC Conference on The Responsibility of the Church for Theological Education New Hoshino Hotel, Karuizawa | NCC Division of Education |
| April 20-21 | General Meeting of Council of Cooperation Japan Christian Center, Tokyo | JCAN 11/26/71 #400 p. 2 |
| May 2-4 | General Assembly Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church Lutheran Theological Seminary, Tokyo | |
| May 30-June 2 | NCC Urban-Industrial Mission Conference Tozanso, Gotemba | JCAN 3/10/72 #406 p. 3 (27) |

Composer Toshiro Mayuzumi spoke for millions of Japanese who support the nationalization of Yasukuni Shrine when in his TV program on Feb. 19 (see JCAN Feb. 25, 1972 #405 p. 1 (19)), he said:

In every country there is a monument to commemorate the men who sacrificed their lives to defend their country....Also in Japan we have the Yasukuni Shrine. The spirits of those who fell in the wars...were worshipped as gods in this shrine and received national respect.

However, when the Greater East Asia War was lost, the Japanese who had experienced the misery of the war to the full, decided that war was bad, that the Japanese had been wrong in starting the war and that the whole people of Japan must repent so that they would not make the same mistake again. Although everyone felt sorry for those who had died in the war, the leading sentiment was that they had died in vain.

Of course, the victorious nations such as the United States, Britain and the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, fearing Japan's retaliation, made an all-out effort to implant this kind of thinking in the minds of the Japanese. These victorious nations wanted to change the very basis of the social structure of Japan. Toward this aim they first dragged the emperor down from the status of a deity to that of a human being. At the same time, in the name of "freedom of religion," they dragged Shinto, which had been the national religion until then, down to the level of other religions and set up restrictions making it impossible to enforce faith under the new [national] constitution.

As a result, Yasukuni Shrine, like all other shrines, also lost its national patronage. It meant the beginning of a horrible era in which the nation ignores the spirit of those who sacrificed their precious lives to defend the glory of Japan.

It was because of the persistent resurgence in the Japanese mentality of this nostalgia for the pre-war structure that Masahiro Tomura's new book is entitled "Japanese and the Yasukuni issue" (Nihonjin to Yasukuni Mondai, Shinkyo Shuppansha, Protestant Publishing Co., Tokyo 1971). And it was because of this that the meeting to celebrate publication of the book [a custom in Japanese publishing circles] held in Tokyo Feb. 29 was intended to be not a reception to honor the author but an opportunity for the participants to deepen their understanding of the issue.

The participants---students, housewives, laborers; pastors, Buddhist priests, Tenrikyo youth, atheists; scholars, politicians, journalists---were indicative of the wide range of people involved in the anti-Yasukuni movement. Eighteen persons fortunate enough to be selected by the chairman from about seventy anxious-to-speak participants expressed their feelings in speeches that made clear the nature of the nationalization that is at issue:

1. Yasukuni Shrine makes an animistic religion into a state religion which all would be forced to accept.
2. War monuments are shrines which honor only military personnel, most of whom have been engaged in killing the enemy---some in such brutal ways that the countries in which those killings took place cannot forget nor forgive those crimes of which a great number of their own people were victims, even after many years.
3. There is a tendency in Japanese thinking not only to keep silent about, or to forget, brutal acts of war but also to justify what Japan did and to interpret the national repentance after the war as something forced upon it by other nations and not representative of the true sentiment of the people. The Yasukuni bill typifies this attitude.
4. Hence, in the proposed bill, there is an incognito rising militarism, toward which many Asian nations have a sense of fear.

***** Reflecting upon the whole anti-Yasukuni movement, Author Tomura said, "If I were to select the catch phrase most appropriate for the movement today, it would be "to establish an identity that is able to reject". He explained that he feels the Yasukuni Shrine bill is rooted deeply in the mentality of the Japanese people and in structures based upon it, and that the movement is therefore the struggle to "break out of this mindset of Japan and the Japanese. This could be an endless struggle, he said, one in which each participant must establish solid ground for his own involvement.

As for himself, Tomura said, three factors have contributed to building up his own convictions. One is his experience of study in the United States. Through it, he confessed, he learned "the grammar of 'Yes' and 'No.'" In comparison with Japanese grammar, in English grammar 'Yes' and 'No' are used in a very strict sense.

(In Japanese, for instance, you are asked, "Aren't you hungry?" If you are not hungry, the answer is "Yes, I am not hungry." If you are hungry, "No, I am hungry." "Yes" and "No" depend upon the form of the sentence addressed to you. "Yes" in Japanese affirms the form of the question, "No" denies it.)

The second factor Tomura mentioned is the Christian faith itself. This faith gave him the basis on which to say "Yes" and "No", he said. The third element is one that came to him through the anti-Yasukuni movement itself. There he learned to whom the "Yes" and "No" should be addressed.

The internationalization of thinking of those who are involved in the movement was very evident throughout the meeting. A number of speakers, who had recently been in Great Britain, Communist China, North Vietnam, North Korea and other Asian countries, reported reactions they had witnessed against recent trends in Japan.

Dr. In Ha Lee, general secretary of the Korean Christian Church in Japan, told of his disappointment with Tomura's previous book "Yasukuni Tōsō" (The Yasukuni Struggle). He said that even a man like Tomura reveals the common weakness in Japanese when he refers to the fact that democracy in Japan was founded at the cost of 2 & 1/2 million Japanese lives and one-half of the Japanese territory. "Does he ignore the hundreds of millions of other victims of the war--Japanese and non-Japanese? Half of Japan's territory means Korea, Taiwan and Sakhalin. For us, Japan's defeat meant our liberation," Lee exclaimed. Lee concluded by saying he hopes Tomura will write his next book on "Asia and the Yasukuni Issue."

President Norie Akiyama of Shinkyo Shuppansha announced that Tomura's first book, Yasukuni Struggle, went through three printings with a total sale of 3,500 copies. The first printing of his second book on "Japanese and the Yasukuni Issue" was sold out and a second printing of 500 copies is now about to come off the press.

FIRE DAMAGES OSAKA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Fire broke out early the morning of Tues. March 7 in the Osaka Community Development Center of the Korean Christian Church in Japan, in Ikuno-ku, Osaka, causing damage to the entire first floor lobby, office and kitchen of the newly renovated building. (see JCAN #399, Nov. 12, 1971 p. 3)

The fire is thought to have been caused by an intruder who entered through the kitchen. Fortunately the losses were covered by insurance but the activities of the center will be hampered for a short period. The fire was discovered by a pastor from Korea who was staying at the Center and who smelled smoke.